

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 21, 2022

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We write to express our grave concern regarding the Biden Administration's announced plans to host migration talks in Washington, D.C. with the totalitarian, terrorist state in Cuba. We especially condemn any attempts to legitimize this illegitimate dictatorship, which violently suppressed activists following the July 11 protests, and imprisoned hundreds of people including children, for exercising their fundamental right to free expression. In addition, the regime continues to force Cuban nationals into exile, or prohibit their return to Cuba.

The Cuban regime and its thugs have not earned a negotiating seat across the table from the United States. First, numerous press reports have highlighted the circumstances of Cuban activists who have been pressured into leaving Cuba, and some have sought U.S. entry or a third country refuge as a result, such as activists such as Pastor Carlos Sebastian Hernandez Armas, Raul Gonzalez Manso, and Niurcy Acosta Pacheco. Others, such as Thais Mailen Franco Benítez, Esteban Rodriguez and Anamely Ramos have condemned human rights abuses in Cuba over the past year, and have been persecuted for their activities. Some remain detained in third countries such as young independent journalist Esteban Rodriguez, who remains detained in Mexico after being pressured to leave his home in Cuba. Meanwhile, the Cuban regime has prevented Anamely Ramos from returning to her home country, and has made U.S. airlines complicit in its malfeasance by requiring them to blacklist Cuban nationals that cannot book return flights home. The regime's actions are a clear violation of the basic human rights to freedom of movement and nationality as expressed in Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that, "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country."

Accordingly, instead of negotiating, we believe that you should not move forward with the ill-conceived plan to negotiate with operatives of the Cuban dictatorship. At a minimum, we suggest that you raise the regime's numerous human rights abuses related to migration, including the right to leave and return to one's country. We also believe that that you should emphasize the Migration Accords' guarantee that Cuban nationals who are forcibly repatriated are monitored upon return to Cuba to ensure that they do not face reprisals for trying to escape Communist tyranny.

For these reasons, we are alarmed by the Biden Administration's apparent desire to seek an opportunity to sit down with yet another of the world's most dangerous, anti-American and repressive dictatorships. For these reasons, and within all applicable rules and regulations, we ask that the Administration's misguided decision to seek to legitimize the illegitimate Cuban regime be reconsidered.

Sincerely,



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress
Subcommittee on State, Foreign
Operations and Related Programs
House Committee on Appropriations



María Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress
Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Civilian
Security, Migration and International Economic Policy
House Committee on Foreign Affairs



Carlos Gimenez
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation
and Maritime Security
House Committee on Homeland Security